(d) A continuous and multi-faceted effort is always afoot by Indian Air Force to enhance and upgrade flight safety. Measures to enhance the quality of training to improve the skill levels, ability to exercise sound judgement and situational awareness of pilots are being pursued. Constant interaction with Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL) and Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) of concerned countries is also maintained to overcome the technical defects of aircrafts. Besides, anti-bird measures are also undertaken.

Cheetah helicopter crash

1490. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a 'Cheetah' helicopter of the IAF crashed on 22nd April, 2004, near LoC in Jammu and Kashmir ;

(b) if so, the cause of crash as established in the statutory inquiry conducted into the accident;

(c) the extent of loss caused due to the crash; and

(d) the number of helicopters of this category of IAF which met with accidents and were lost during the last five years, year-wise and how the loss was made up?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The cause of this crash was Human Error (Aircrew).

(c) This was a Category-I accident in which the helicopter was destroyed and the captain sustained fatal injuries. There was no loss to the civilian life and property.

(d) The details of helicopters that crashed during the last five years are as under:—

Financial Year	No. of crash
1999-2000	01
2000-2001	03

Financial Year	No. of crash
2001-2002	00
2002-2003	00
2003-2004	00
2004-2005 (till 9th August, 2004)	01

The loss was made up by inducting 10 new Cheetah helicopters during the period February, 2002 to November, 2003.

International Airport at Devanahalli near Bangalore

1491. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY. Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have given clearance for the proposed International Airport at Devanahalli near Bangalore; and

(b) if so, whether the Defence Ministry has put pre-conditions for closure of its HAL Airport consequent on the proposed International Airport becoming operational?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir. The operation at HAL airport, Bangalore will continue even after Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) becomes functional. In case, HAL airport is closed down the cost of closure would be made good to HAL.

Request for independent Inquiry into lapses in Kargil War

1492. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state.

(a) whether requests have been received for independent inquiry in the lapses in Kargil war; and

(b) if so, the action taken thereon?